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SAE closes chapter after hazing investigation



PHOTO BY: MARLEE CRAWFORD

SAE fraternity house.

LANA FERGUSON
EDITOR IN CHIEF

There is one fewer Greek organization on campus as of this semester. The University of Mississippi’s chapter of Sigma Alpha Epsilon, also referred to as SAE, was closed by its national headquarters in mid-December and disbanded the group until at least 2021.

Months of investigation led to SAE nationals and the university finding health and safety concerns within the organization and members not upholding the fraternity’s national standards for behavior, according to a statement SAE headquarters released. All current members of the chapter have been suspended from the fraternity indefinitely, and members recruited this fall have

been released. Members who were planning to live in the fraternity’s house on campus this semester had to find other living arrangements. Melinda Sutton Noss, assistant vice chancellor and dean of students, worked closely with the investigation that led to the chapter’s closure. She said the university received hazing allegations involving SAE shortly after the Interfra-

ternity Council’s Bid Day in September and began investigations immediately. “Information gathered during the investigation by the Office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct uncovered serious and concerning conduct, and we had significant concerns for the health and safety of students,” Sutton Noss said. “The results of

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UPD police chief resigns

LANA FERGUSON
EDITOR IN CHIEF

This will be Tim Potts’ last week serving as the chief of police for the University Police Department. Potts has accepted a position as police chief for Indiana University-Purdue University at Fort Wayne, he told The Daily Mississippian in an email. “I don’t look at it as leaving Ole Miss,” Potts said. “I love this place. The department is fantastic. I couldn’t work with a better group of people or have a better support system.” He said there is no reason for him leaving other than the chance to be near his family. He is from Indiana, and his daughter still lives there. “This is simply about the opportunity about getting closer to family, nothing more and nothing less,” Potts said. “There are no issues or complaints I had, and it wasn’t a financial decision, simply the chance to be with family. You never get time back, and that is something that Ole Miss just could not overcome.”

Potts took on the police chief position here in June 2015 after spending 13 years as captain of Purdue University’s police department. He said working at Ole Miss the past few of years has been phenomenal. “I will forever be part of the University of Mississippi and will forever be grateful for the opportunity they provided me to guide such a tremendous team of individuals at UPD,” Potts said. “The university is in good hands.” The university has posted the job opening for UPD police chief to its website.

Students attend annual leadership conference

RACHEL ISHEE
NEWS EDITOR

While many students were returning from winter break this weekend, more than 150 sophomore students met for the PULSE (Preparing Undergraduate Leaders, a Student Experience) leadership conference. The conference is designed to help students network with other students in different organizations while also building skills for current and future leadership positions through learning, inspiring and empowering others.



PHOTO BY: RACHEL ISHEE

Hal Sullivan, coordinator of student affairs programs in the Office of Leadership and Advocacy, welcomes students to the second day of the PULSE Conference at the Robert C. Khayat Law Center on Saturday.

The weekend focussed on the core values of collaboration, communication and reflection in order to help students understand themselves and their personal leadership styles. Beverly Langford, president of LMA Communication, a consulting, training and coaching firm, spoke Saturday about the best ways to use communication in all forms of leadership positions and how communication affects many different parts of a person’s life.

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THE DAILY MISSISSIPPIAN
EDITORIAL STAFF:

LANA FERGUSON
editor-in-chief
dmeditor@gmail.com

SLADE RAND
managing editor
dmmanaging@gmail.com

MAGGIE MARTIN
copy chief
thedmcopy@gmail.com

RACHEL ISHEE
MADDIE MCGEE
news editors
thedmnews@gmail.com

BLAKE ALSUP
assistant news editor
thedmnews@gmail.com

SAM HARRES
GRAYSON WEIR
sports editors
thedmsports@gmail.com

MARLEE CRAWFORD
BILLY SCHUERMAN
photography editors
thedmpotos@gmail.com

DEVNA BOSE
lifestyles editor
thedmfeatures@gmail.com

LIAM NIEMAN
opinion editor
thedmopinion@gmail.com

HAYDEN BENGE
ETHEL MWEDZIWENDIRA
design editors
thedmdesign@gmail.com

EMILY HOFFMAN
social media editor

ADVERTISING
SALES MANAGER
Blake Hein
dmads@olemiss.edu

SALES ACCOUNT
EXECUTIVES
Rebecca Brown
Cameron Collins
Sam Dethrow
Ethan Gray

S. GALE DENLEY
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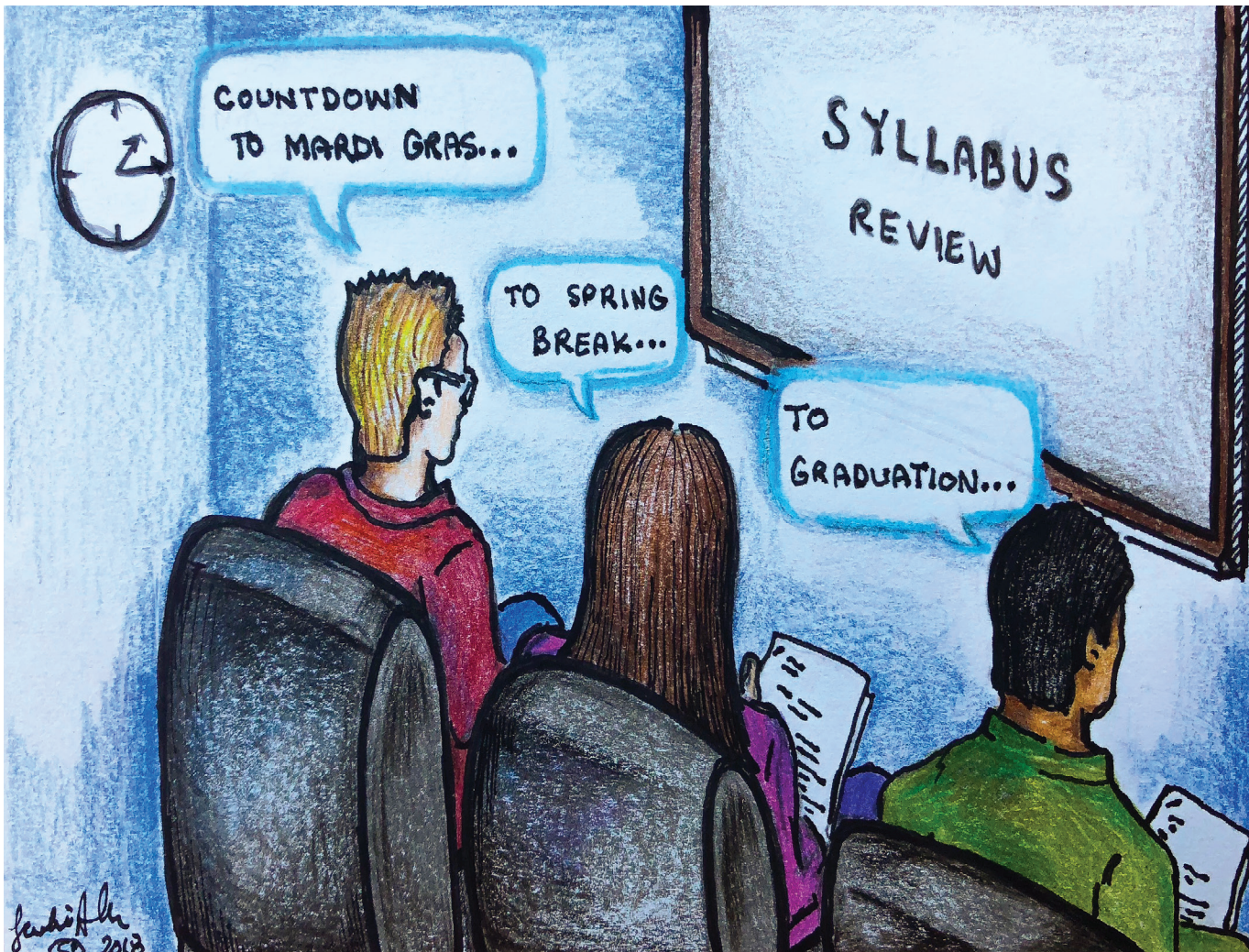
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COLUMN

Why America should adopt tea time



DANIEL PAYNE
STAFF COLUMNIST

As I reflect on my time in Europe over the past semester, there are many things I'm going to miss about European life. Of all of these things, tea time may be at the top of the list.

Tea time, as stereotypical as it is, is a very serious thing in England. People drink tea in many different settings, but one setting is extremely common: afternoon tea with friends. Even during stressful or busy times, people set aside time from their day to sit, talk

and enjoy a nice drink.

As great as the tea itself is, it isn't the main factor driving the tradition. Instead, it's the way an entire culture agrees on a small time to regularly put human relationships above their to-do lists and responsibilities.

It isn't just the U.K. that values human relationships in a distinctive cultural way. French dinners can often last four or more hours, and frequenting a bar after work with friends is common throughout the rest of Europe. Waiters are in no hurry to clear a table for the next visitors; they know the importance of talking and being together, even after the food is finished.

This is in stark contrast to American culture, which is focused on productivity and individualism. Restaurants are for eating, and coffee is for staying awake to do more work. Defining moments in an average day

in the U.S. may include big tests or projects at work instead of big dinners and interesting conversations. A person's success may be measured by GPA, degree or income, instead of by happiness and time spent with loved ones.

The way people talk at these events is very different, too. In some settings, such as Germany, small talk is considered impolite, as it's just a surface-level expression that has nothing to do with a genuine exchange.

Tea, dinner or bar stops are incorporated into a normal week to discuss the things that actually matter. Conversations are almost always personal or interesting – usually both.

This often seems absent in the American culture of working to keep everyone happy over being honest at a social gathering. When we are with others, it is often more about a façade than

honesty.

These principles can be observed in the greater culture, as well, with other countries allowing more generous time off, especially for maternity and paternity leave. To many Europeans, productivity is only a small measure of life satisfaction.

Though we can't choose to opt out of our home culture or decide to change our employers' policies for time off, we can adopt some of the positive practices from other cultures.

We can decide to slow down regularly and interact genuinely with those who are important to us, and, as a result, care for ourselves by seeing that life is more than the endless to-do lists and expectations.

Daniel Payne is a sophomore integrated marketing communications major from Collierville, Tennessee.

THE DAILY
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S. Gale Denley Student Media Center
201 Bishop Hall,
P.O. Box 1848
University, MS
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Letters should be typed, double-spaced and no longer than 300 words. Letters may be edited for clarity, space or libel. Third-party letters and those bearing pseudonyms, pen names or "name withheld" will not be published. Publication is limited to one letter per individual per calendar month.

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MEMBER NEWSPAPER

COLUMN

Sen. Booker's 'tears and anger don't sell'

REAGAN MEREDITH
STAFF COLUMNIST

During an Oval Office meeting between the president and senators from both sides of the aisle last week, Donald Trump was asked about allowing immigrants from Haiti and several African nations to enter the U.S. As you now know, President Trump was said to have responded in a poor but unsurprising way: “Why are we having all these people from s***hole countries come here?”

As expected, the media had a field day. The quote prompted most left-leaning news outlets to not only use the word “s***hole” many times but also to use this to try and prove that Trump is racist.

This was an unrecorded, closed-door meeting, so there are some who deny, some who confirm and some who claim not to have heard.

Sen. Dick Durbin, a Democrat, said President Trump

“... said these hateful things, and he said them repeatedly,” and Sen. Lindsey Graham, a Republican, reportedly confronted the president during the meeting about his comments.

But Republican Sens. David Perdue and Tom Cotton issued a joint statement claiming they didn’t hear the president make these comments. And finally, President Trump denied using the language but said through Twitter that he used “tough language.”

Among the people at the meeting who say they don’t recall what Trump said is Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen. Last Tuesday, Nielsen reaffirmed this while testifying under oath before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

After her denial, Democratic Sen. Cory Booker, who obviously wants to make a 2020 bid for president, tore into her. Booker said Nielsen’s “silence and amnesia is complicity” and claimed that

when Durbin called him after the meeting and told him what the president said, he cried “tears of rage.”

Booker’s “tears of rage” comment reminds me of a story about a presidential candidate who was accused of crying and whose candidacy suffered because of it.

Edmund Muskie, a senator of Maine and President Carter’s secretary of state, was a front-runner for the Democratic nomination in the presidential election of 1972.

After Muskie beat George McGovern in the New Hampshire primary, his wife was attacked by the press. He then defended his wife and looked as though he was crying. He made the statement on a snowy day, and the snow melting on his face looked like tears. The press reported that he broke down and cried, essentially ending his candidacy.

This is not to say that crying isn’t sometimes OK. There are situations in life in which crying is appropriate. But

there used to be a time when crying and getting emotional over trivial, inappropriate or political matters was a sign of weakness.

In today’s political climate of serial outrage, Booker is labeled as a hero for showing his “soft side” and praised for his façade of outrage that, at the end of his charade before the committee, left no chance for Nielsen to respond.

Booker’s bad acting would have been criticized much more harshly and surely been accused of “mansplaining” if he were a Republican shouting at Hillary Clinton.

Booker is a serial fabulist whose tears and anger don’t sell. Whether Nielsen heard the comments or not, it does not excuse Booker from his obviously pre-planned and one-sided attack used only to boost his presidential odds.

Reagan Meredith is a sophomore political science major from Monroe, Louisiana.

NEWS



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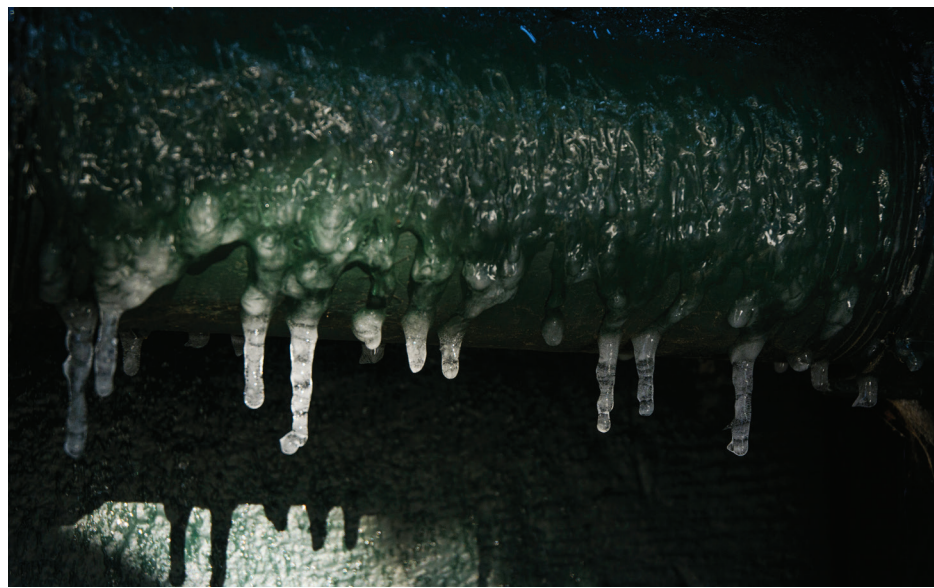
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PHOTOS BY: MARLEE CRAWFORD

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SAE

continued from page 1

the investigation revealed actions concerning enough that the chapter should be closed for a period of time.”

Sutton Noss said the university made the national organization aware of the allegations and investigation very early on in the process and shared the findings with it again at the conclusion of the investigation.

“Ultimately, the national organization made the decision to close the chapter,” she said.

Sutton Noss said that throughout the 3 ½ years she has been at the university, SAE has not been under investigation or served a penalty.

“The loss of this long-standing chapter is unfortunate, but

it serves as a crucial reminder to our collegiate members, chapter officers and alumni that violations to Minerva’s Shield and failure to follow our membership-education program known as the True Gentleman Experience will not be tolerated and may result in closure,” the SAE nationals said.

The statement said that although nationals regrets the closure of any chapter, there are situations in which it becomes necessary and warranted.

“We remain optimistic that we can re-establish Mississippi Gamma in the future and members who exemplify our Ritual and beliefs and who serve as leading role models on campus and the greater Oxford community,” the statement said.

Former SAE Alumni Advi-

sor Watson Horner was unavailable for an interview and deferred to SAE national’s statement. Former SAE President Holcombe Crosswell and IFC President Jarrett Estess did not respond to emails requesting interviews.

SAE is not the only Greek organization that has been accused of hazing on campus this year.

In October, Vice Chancellor Brandi Hephner LaBanc told The Daily Mississippian four Greek organizations were under investigation for possible hazing. Sutton Noss confirmed some of those groups are still under investigation but could not share the organizations’ names.

She said she doesn’t necessarily believe there has been an increase in hazing occurring on campus but that more is being reported.

“In recent years, we’ve made a concerted effort to educate campus community members about hazing, and I think this education is paying off through increased reporting,” Sutton Noss said. “Knowing about hazing allows us to address it.”

She said hazing is not confined to just fraternities and sororities, but it can also be found in many different pockets on campus and the Office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct conducts investigations whenever it receives any allegations.

Sutton Noss said the university is working to be more proactive in its approach to combat hazing and do more education and outreach programs. One example is the Division of Student Affairs forming a Hazing Work Group composed of faculty, staff and

students from various areas on campus to explore the climate related to hazing and take actions to eliminate it.

“We’re only able to address hazing if we know when and where it is occurring,” Sutton Noss said. “Ultimately, though, we must rely on our community and our organizations to hold each other accountable with respect to hazing.”

The last time a chapter was closed on campus was in 2014, after two members of Sigma Phi Epsilon put a noose and old Georgia flag with a Confederate battle emblem on the James Meredith statue. The university requested a review by the fraternity’s national headquarters, which found a pattern of underage drinking and hazing, resulting in the closure of its Ole Miss chapter.

PULSE

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Langford talked about how a person’s reputation greatly correlates with his or her ability to communicate effectively.

“A lot of times, perception outweighs reality,” Langford said. “The problem with your reputation is that it’s a rolling, moving part. It’s changing all the time because you’re changing all the time and you’re doing different things.”

She went on to say that maintaining credibility is im-

portant to help your reputation among colleagues.

Friday night consisted of a welcome to the conference, dinner sponsored by the Associated Student Body and a keynote address by Randy Gravitt, author of “Finding Your Way: Discovering The Truth About You” and founder of INTEGRATE Leadership.

“It was really exciting for me, last night, to see everybody who was really engaged and invested in ... Randy Gravitt’s keynote,” said Hal Sullivan, coordinator of student affairs programs, Office of Leadership and Advocacy.

Saturday consisted of several speeches throughout the day addressing the three core values of PULSE from Beverly Langford, Lionel Maten and E.J. Presley, along with small group sessions to reflect on what the students had learned and what their takeaways were from the lectures.

Melinda Sutton Noss, assistant vice chancellor for student affairs and dean of students, welcomed the participants to their second day of the conference and talked about the importance of participation in the PULSE program on their futures.

“I hope that (students) will take advantage of all of the amazing opportunities that the staff has put together during this conference,” Noss said. “They have worked very hard and have been very intentional in the activities and presentations that they have coordinated.”

Noss said that while learning and growing as a leader is the overall objective of the conference, students should still expect to have fun and enjoy themselves while enhancing their leadership abilities.

“(The staff) have structured the program to make it as fun

and as engaging as possible, which means that I know that today is going to be another great day,” Noss said.

In addition, Saturday’s conference also addressed diversity and potential challenges.

“There’s no doubt that the world has changed. It certainly is more diverse, which is great,” Langford said. “It makes such a positive difference, but it doesn’t make things easier necessarily because you’ve got cultural differences and all kinds of backgrounds, and you’ve got to learn to cross those differences.”

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University news you might have missed over break

MADDIE MCGEE
NEWS EDITOR

NCAA FINAL RULING

On Dec. 1, the university received the NCAA's Committee on Infractions' final ruling. Fifteen of the 21 allegations were Level I, the most serious classification. Penalties included three years of probation running from Dec. 1, 2017, to Nov. 30, 2020; a financial penalty of \$179,797; an additional year of postseason bans in 2018; and scholarship reductions through the 2018-19 season.

On Dec. 15, the university submitted to the NCAA written notice of its intent to appeal the decision.

"We have the best legal team in the country to handle our NCAA appeal. We added Mississippi-based firms to further strengthen an already exceptional team so that we are in the best possible position to win this appeal," Chancellor Jeffrey Vitter wrote in a statement. "We believe the additional penalties imposed by the COI are unwarranted, which we will make very clear at the appropriate time in our written submissions on the merits of our appeal."

As a result of the NCAA ruling, several football players have transferred to other universities. The transfers of quarterback Shea Patterson to the University of Michigan and wide receiver Van Jefferson to the University of Florida are among some of the departures from the Ole Miss football program.

CONTEXTUALIZATION

On Dec. 5, the university announced a March 2 unveiling of several contextualization



PHOTO BY: BILLY SCHUERMAN

Athletics Director Ross Bjork announced the university's decision to appeal the sanctions after the NCAA and the COI ruling, in which the NCAA added an additional bowl game ban in 2018.

plaques on campus. The contextualization plaques will be placed at Barnard Observatory, Lamar Hall, Longstreet Hall, George Hall, in addition to a plaque recognizing the university's enslaved laborers in the constructions of Barnard Observatory, the Croft Institute, the Lyceum and Hilgard Cut.

In addition to the announced plaques, after public input, Vitter accepted an additional recommendation to add a contextualization plaque for the stained glass windows in Ventrass Hall. The windows recognize the University Greys, a group of Ole Miss students who left the university in 1861 to serve in the Civil War.

The Chancellor's Advisory Committee on History and Context has created a website with renderings of the plaques, which detail the history behind the naming of the buildings recommended for contextualization.

SAE CLOSING

On Dec. 12, the Sigma Alpha

Epsilon national headquarters announced the closure of its chapter at the University of Mississippi. It cited health and safety concerns, as well as members not upholding the fraternity's national standards for behavior, as reasons for the chapter's closure.

The university released a statement saying the closing of the chapter came after reports of hazing allegations and an investigation by the Office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct, the results of which were shared with SAE headquarters.

"The actions that led to this decision are deeply disappointing and troubling," the statement reads. "Hazing will not be tolerated and we support the actions of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity to close the chapter."

All current members were suspended from the fraternity indefinitely, and members recruited in the fall 2017 recruitment period were released.

SAE headquarters said it

hopes SAE can re-establish the chapter someday.

"Although we regret the closure of any chapter, there are situations in which it becomes necessary and warranted. We remain optimistic that we can

re-establish Mississippi Gamma in the future and members who exemplify our Ritual and beliefs and who serve as leading role models on campus and the greater Oxford community."

SNOW DELAYS EXTEND INTERSESSION COURSES

As intercession courses began to wind down, a Jan. 12 winter storm closed campus. Across Mississippi, snow and ice created dangerous conditions on the roads. Locally, the university, Oxford and Lafayette County schools were closed. For students taking intercession courses, the final day of courses was delayed, which also affected the final exam schedules.

A storm last Monday forced more closures Tuesday and Wednesday, further hindering the final exam schedule. Final exams were moved to Thursday, lengthening the intercession period by nearly a week.

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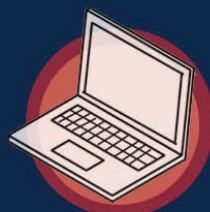
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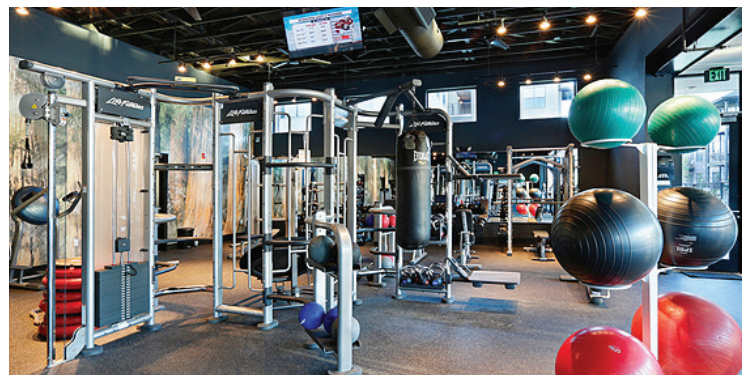
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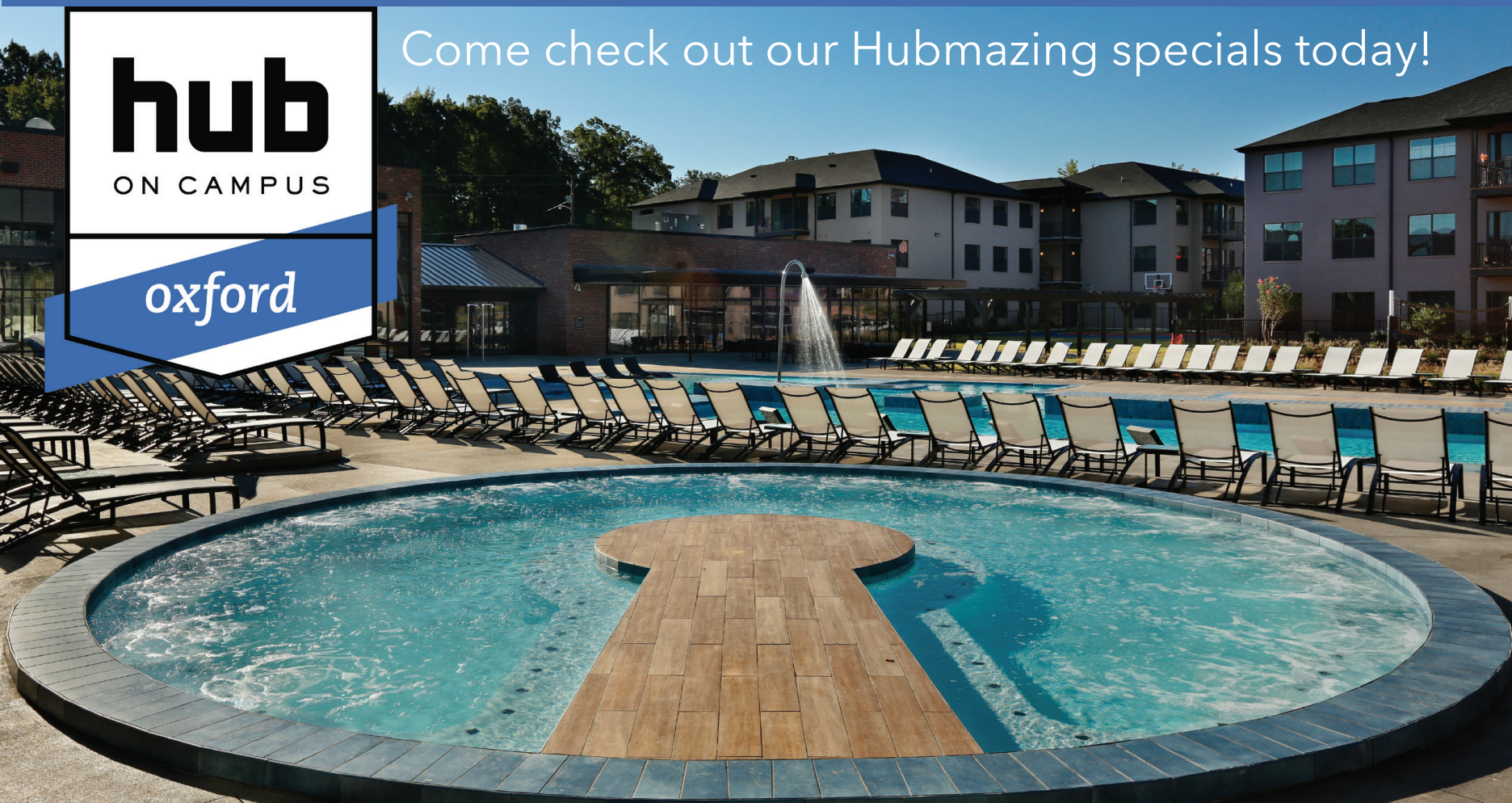


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10 ways to start this semester strong

JORDYN SMITH
STAFF WRITER

Though it often comes with stress, there are always ways to make the new semester better than you could have thought. Start your semester off strong with these tips.

1.) GET ORGANIZED – LOOK AT YOUR SCHEDULE BEFORE THE FIRST DAY

Even though this one should go without saying, one of the most important parts of getting organized for the semester is looking at your class schedule. Before the first day, make sure you know not only what time your classes are but also what building they're in and the best way to get there. We all know the nightmare that comes with parking, so get your strategy together before the first day. You'll thank me when you don't have to start the semester with a hefty parking ticket because you were too rushed and had to park in a faculty lot.

3.) WRITE THINGS DOWN – GET A PLANNER!

Writing down important details is key for the success of any student. My favorite way is to keep a planner and write down everything: your schedule, your test dates, your final exam, big projects and even fun things like your formal, Mardi Gras weekend or spring break. Get your dates set straight so you don't miss a beat on any of the fun and important things to come this spring semester.

5.) SCANTRONS

Buy your Scantrons and blue books ahead of time. Nothing's worse than being the kid who shows up stressed to a test and forgot a scantron and #2 pencil. Don't be that kid. Run by the bookstore early in the semester and stock up on the essential blue books and purple scantrons. Whatever your teacher's testing methods may be, get prepared ahead of time to be sure you're ready to fill in all those bubbles throughout the semester ahead.

7.) TAKE A PICTURE OF YOUR STUDENT ID

Nothing's worse than trying to scan in late to class only to realize your student ID is still on the counter at home from paying for Papa John's. A quality picture of your ID can not only help you scan in if you forget it but can also be helpful when you need to remember your ID number on exams.

9.) FIND NEW WAYS TO ENJOY OXFORD

There are often many new things to discover in Oxford. Let this be the semester you try something new. Go to a restaurant you've never been to, see a show at the Ford Center or go on the Double Decker art crawls. Whatever you're interested in, take time to try something new in Oxford this semester. Oxford's full of adventures for those who seek them.

2.) READ YOUR SYLLABUS

As silly as syllabi and the week that comes with them are, read what they say. You'll be thankful when you actually know the dates of your exams or the fact that you can't book your flight for summer until the Friday of finals week because you have an exam that afternoon.

4.) BUY YOUR BOOKS

It sounds obvious, but the best way to pass most classes is to actually read the book. Make sure you know which books are necessary for your classes beforehand. Buying extra loose-leaf paper, calculators, your favorite color pens or pencils, the fanciest highlighters you can find or whatever helps you survive your studies this semester should be done before classes start.

6.) BUDGET

Nothing's worse than being a poor college student living off of ramen noodles. That's why planning a semester or weekly budget will help you maximize your money this semester. Try saving a few dollars where you can. You'll be thankful to have some spare cash for emergencies or even a weekend getaway you deserve.

8.) BASEBALL GAMES

Ole Miss sports don't just stop after football season. Prepare for the beer showers and get your seats secured in the baseball stadium early. Our baseball boys are no joke, so try to make it to as many games as you can to show your Rebel pride this spring.

10.) GET INVOLVED – STEP OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE

Try to get more involved this semester, either within the Oxford community, on campus or in an organization you're a member of. Maybe join a club you've never heard of or spend your Saturday giving back at the Oxford Humane Society. Oxford is overflowing with fun organizations and groups to get involved with. Find one that vibes with you and give it a try. It's often the uncertain situations and new things we try that lead to the best opportunities, friendships and memories.

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ACSI 2017

Close losses, streaky shooting define men’s basketball

FLINT CHRISTIAN
STAFF WRITER

Last Tuesday, Ole Miss men’s basketball was in prime position to grab a win on the road against a tough Texas A&M team. Breein Tyree found himself open for a deep three down 71-69 with time running out. As the buzzer sounded, his shot hit the back rim, the front rim, the back rim again, the front rim again and then slowly rolled out, to the shock of an already celebrating Ole Miss bench.

So the season has been for the Rebels.

Ole Miss entered Monday morning with a 10-9 record (3-4 in the SEC) including three overtime losses, the heartbreaker in College Station and a down-to-the-buzzer four-point loss to Arkansas on Saturday afternoon. In some games, the Rebels look like a tournament team that can hit shots and spread the floor using their plethora of athletic guards. In others, the Rebels have struggled to find the consistency to put teams away or keep up when their shots aren’t falling.

Ole Miss lives and dies by the 3-pointer. When the Rebels make more than 33 percent of their 3-pointers in a game, they are 10-2. When they fall below that mark, they are 1-7. It makes sense that a team built to play from



PHOTO BY: MARLEE CRAWFORD

Markel Crawford dribbles toward the goal during the game against Florida earlier this season. Ole Miss won 78-72.

the outside in would rely on jump-shot efficiency, and it became clear early on in the season that head coach Andy Kennedy would lean on his guards to create opportunities, make shots and get to the rim consistently.

Kennedy’s system has worked well on the offen-

sive side of the ball, as Ole Miss averages 78.8 points per game, which is good for 75th in the country. However, a lack of size on defense has led to opponents scoring 75.9 points per game, which ranks Ole Miss’ scoring defense a less-than-successful 269th in the nation. In addi-

tion, close shootout losses to Illinois State, South Dakota State and Arkansas presumably will come back to haunt the Rebels when the selection committee sits down in March.

When it comes to putting the ball in the hoop, Ole Miss has three guards averag-

ing more than 10 points per game. The talent in the front-court has been on full display as Deandre Burnett, Terence Davis, Markel Crawford and Breein Tyree have learned to share time and responsibilities despite their similar skill sets. Burnett leads the team with 14.3 points and 4.8 assists per game, but the key to the Rebels’ attack has been its balance and flexibility among all the backcourt players.

In particular, Davis has been especially impressive with his effort to play an all-around game. He currently averages 6.1 rebounds per game, which leads the team.

Although the overall roster size lacks, junior college transfer Bruce Stevens has grown into his key role on the inside for the Rebels. He is averaging 10.6 points per game on 54 percent shooting, and his efficiency from the inside has been an excellent counter to the guard-heavy lineup Ole Miss rolls out.

When looking at its 10-9 record, it is clear that Ole Miss is more comfortable at home. The 9-3 home record includes conference wins over first-place Florida and rival Mississippi State, while the road record reads 0-5.

The Rebels will continue their journey to “Big Dance” relevance against Alabama at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday in The Pavilion.

Women's basketball resilient after early injuries

FLINT CHRISTIAN
STAFF WRITER

Seven games into the year, Ole Miss women’s basketball season turned on a dime when returning senior and preseason second team All-SEC guard Shandricka Sessom went down with a torn ACL in the first quarter of a win against Middle Tennessee. Entering that game, Sessom was averaging 17.7 points per game while shooting above 50 percent from the field and 47 percent from three.

Sessom was a force on the court and the most valuable player for the Rebels coming into the season, and it is safe to say her injury was a massive loss for an Ole Miss squad looking to improve on last year’s 10th-place finish in the SEC.

However, since that injury, the Rebels have stepped up. In a year in which Ole Miss was picked to finish second-to-last in the SEC, the Rebels entered Monday with an 11-7 (1-4 in conference) record and tied for 10th place in the SEC. A resilient attitude and reliance



PHOTO COURTESY: JOSHUA MCCOY | OLE MISS ATHLETICS

Alissa Alston charges toward the rim during the game against Missouri earlier this season. Missouri won 67-48.

on a next-woman-up mentality have driven this season upward.

Junior guards Madinah Muhammad and Alissa Alston have done well filling the shoes Sessom left. Muhammad is averaging 17.4 points per game and leads the team with 33 steals,

while Alston is averaging 14.6 points per game while shooting 43.3 percent from the field. Alston also ranks fifth in the SEC with 4.8 assists per game.

Almost as impressive as their scoring output has been simply the amount of time the two have spent on

the court. Out of 170 possible minutes in the first four conference games, Alston has played 167 minutes and Muhammad has played 156 minutes. The Rebels have relied on their veterans to stay energized on the court, and Alston and Muhammad have come through in a big way.

The Rebels have delivered a number of tough, inspired outings, especially as conference play has begun. Despite a 12-point deficit entering the fourth quarter, the Rebels stormed back late against Arkansas on New Year’s Eve, only to fall just short and lose 73-72.

In their next game, the Rebels were within double digits of SEC leader and defending national champion South Carolina heading into the fourth quarter, before the Gamecocks pulled away. Muhammad put on a show, especially in the third quarter, in which she scored 10 of her 29 points to come within one of her career high.

The Rebels also notched their first conference win of the season with a double-overtime victory over

Florida, 78-75 at home. Freshman forward Promise Taylor led the Rebels in scoring with her 16 points off the bench and flashed her slashing potential to head coach Matt Insell. Taylor has been a defensive force this season, and her 2.7 blocks per game ranks third in the SEC. Her development as conference play moves on will be a storyline to follow, as her 6-foot-5-inch frame and defensive ability should scare future opponents and give hope to the Rebel faithful.

The Rebels have battled close against a slew of tough teams, including No. 3 Mississippi State, No. 7 Oregon, No. 10 South Carolina and No. 11 Missouri, but losses to Arkansas and Portland State certainly sting. A solid finish could result in a National Women’s Invitational Tournament invitation, and a stellar streak with a few upsets along the way could hold a possible NCAA Tournament bid.

Ole Miss will continue play on the road in Knoxville, Tennessee, against the Volunteers at 6 p.m. Thursday.



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University extends Steven McRoberts' contract

MAGGIE CROUCH
STAFF WRITER

A combined 2,238 digs, 1846 kills, 294 blocks and 22 wins make up one of Ole Miss women's volleyball's best seasons in school history.

Behind this success is head coach Steven McRoberts, who was awarded with a contract extension announced by Vice Chancellor for Intercollegiate Athletics Ross Bjork on Thursday night. McRoberts received a four-year extension, which is the longest allowed by the state of Mississippi.

"Coach McRoberts has done a great job of steadily building our program since he arrived at Ole Miss," Bjork said. "His intentional approach to recruiting, coaching and developing our student-athletes has paid off with record-setting individual performances, team records and the 2017 NIVC Championship."

Since he started coaching the Rebels back in 2014, McRob-



FILE PHOTO BY: MARLEE CRAWFORD

Volleyball head coach Steven McRoberts talks to the players on the court during the NIVC championship game, in which Ole Miss defeated Texas Tech this past season.

erts has turned the program around. Inheriting a team that in the two years prior posted a 26-34 overall record and finished at the bottom of the SEC standings, he has achieved an 83-49 record in four seasons at Ole Miss.

Not only has McRoberts'

coaching led to success over the past four years, but the 2017 season in particular was one to remember. The Rebels tied the most wins in program history with a season record of 22-14 and earned their first post-season victory on their way to capturing the NIVC Championship. En route to its postseason tournament title, the team set single-season records for kills, assists, digs and blocks.

In addition to its success on the court, the team also excelled in the classroom, for which Bjork took note.

"His teams have also competed in the classroom by having a

perfect graduation success rate since he arrived," he said.

Coming off a historic 2017 season, Bjork emphasised the importance of looking toward the future and how the program can improve under McRoberts' guidance in the next four years.

"The foundation for long-term success has been put in place, and the next step is competing for SEC and NCAA championships," Bjork said. "Combined with the investment in the brand-new Gillom Athletics Performance Center, coach McRoberts has performances in the years to come."

Some highlights from this

past season lie in two girls who played their last set as Rebels when senior outside hitters Lexi Thompson and Kate Gibson became the first members of the 1,000/1,000 club at Ole Miss in the rally era. Notably, Thompson set a career record for kills and aces, as well as Gibson finishing as one of just eight players in the nation to post at least 400 kills and 400 digs in 2017.

The team has some recurring talent returning with sophomore outside hitter Emily Stroup, who earned AVCA All-Region and NIVC Championship MVP honors, as well as setting the single-season kills record of 474. Defensively, junior libero Caroline Adams set the single-season record with 552 digs and ranked among the top 10 in the SEC in digs per set at 3.90 and was named to the NIVC All-Tournament Team.

Although 2017 was a great season for the Rebels, McRoberts is already looking forward to next season and making the program even better.

"I am so blessed to be the head coach at Ole Miss," McRoberts said. "Getting a contract extension is a direct reflection on how well our staff and players have done to get this program moving in the right direction. We had an exciting 2017, and this is just the beginning."

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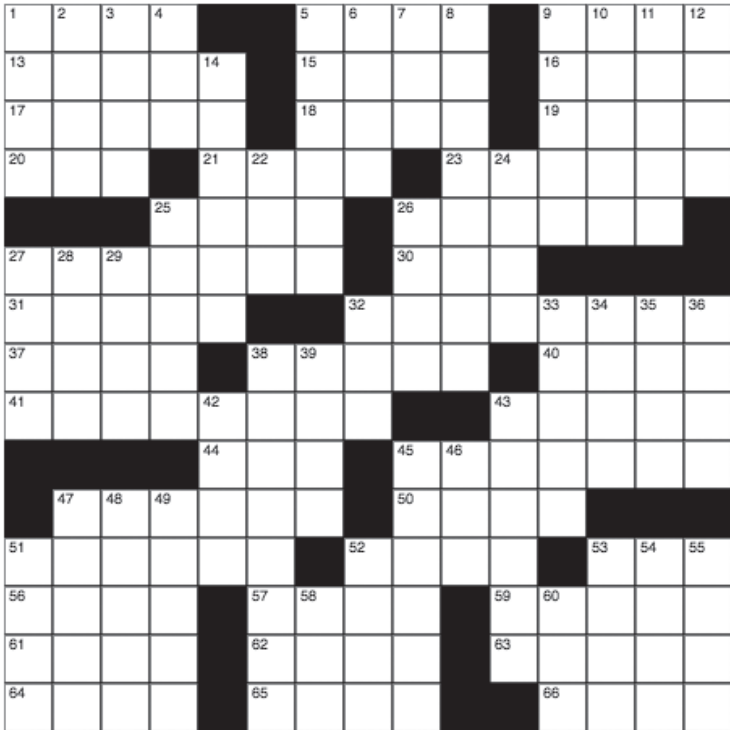
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- ACROSS**
- 1 Pet plant
 - 5 Traditional prayer ending
 - 9 Uttered
 - 13 Pound part
 - 15 Dole (out)
 - 16 Neighbor of Sask.
 - 17 Valuable violin
 - 18 Shoppe sign word
 - 19 Robin's digs
 - 20 Vietnamese holiday
 - 21 Hardware fastener
 - 23 Teaching of the Buddha
 - 25 Son of Odin
 - 26 Soap ingredient
 - 27 Book of the New Testament
 - 30 Actress Arthur
 - 31 Bellowing
 - 32 Uneasy
 - 37 Coil
 - 38 Green-lights
 - 40 Varieties
 - 41 Abandoned
 - 43 Sheep cry
 - 44 Shortened version of actor Stallone's first name
 - 45 Dramatic dances
 - 47 Trojan War hero
- DOWN**
- 1 Paint layer
 - 2 Actor Cronyn
 - 3 ___ the finish
 - 4 Do something
 - 5 Love affairs
 - 6 Dissolve
 - 7 LAX posting
 - 8 Unnecessary
 - 9 Capital city of Yemen
 - 10 Tip off
 - 11 "Who's there?" response
 - 12 Computer input
 - 14 One or the other name
 - 22 Without delay
 - 24 Warmth
 - 25 Snares

YOU DON'T WANT TO LOOK BACK AND KNOW YOU COULD HAVE DOWN BETTER.

- 26 Follow orders
- 27 50%
- 28 Switch ending
- 29 Rude dude
- 32 Sought office
- 33 French textile city
- 34 Gen. Robert ___
- 35 Three-player card game
- 36 Fast fliers
- 38 State of USA
- 39 Lock openers
- 42 Wait ___!
- 43 Edible pale-bluish mushroom
- 45 Aromatic ointment
- 46 Blood letters
- 47 Love, Italian-style
- 48 Red fluorescent dye
- 49 Short letters
- 51 Storage shelter
- 52 Cancun coin
- 53 Rejection power
- 54 Once again
- 55 Small gull
- 58 Hockey goal part
- 60 Rodent, betrayer



Crossword puzzle provided by BestCrosswords.com (www.bestcrosswords.com). Used with permission.

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7	8					6		
					9		4	
						1		2
	9				4			3

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Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 with no repeats.

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3	9	5	4	1	2	7	6	8
2	6	1	7	8	8	4	5	9
8	4	7	6	9	5	3	1	2
4	1	6	3	2	6	5	8	7
5	2	3	8	7	6	6	4	1
6	7	8	5	4	1	9	2	3
7	8	4	1	5	3	2	9	6
9	3	6	2	8	4	1	7	5
1	5	2	9	6	7	8	3	4

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COLUMN

Talented backcourt struggling amid 3-point drought

SAM HARRES
SPORTS EDITOR

As Andy Kennedy nears the end of his 13th year as head coach of Ole Miss men's basketball, the program continues to struggle. Important victories, including a barn-burner over Florida earlier this month, are few and far between and have been overshadowed by loss after loss. The Rebels, currently 10-9 overall and 3-4 in conference play, seem unable to put the pieces together.

They have talent – especially in the back court – but can't find a rhythm. Kennedy returned 2016-17 leading scorer Terence Davis; sophomore Breein Tyree, one of the nation's top high school point guards in 2015; and DeAndre Burnett, a mercurial combo guard who transferred from Miami three years ago and has demonstrated an ability to drive and score at will. Add to that corp freshman Devontae Shuler, whom Steve Smith (head coach at Oak Hill Academy, which is known for producing such players as Kevin Durant and Carmelo Anthony) once called the "best on-the-ball defender" he'd ever seen, and it's easy to see why fans expected greatness this year.

But the Ole Miss basketball program has been anything but great. Its 78.8 points per game ranks 75th among NCAA Division I programs, but its defense has been even worse. The Rebels are conceding an average of 75.9 points per game, which is worse than 268 other Division I basketball teams. And those points will count come selection time in March. The Rebels have lost five games by six or fewer points this season.

Consider Saturday's 97-93 loss to Arkansas, an unranked SEC opponent with a losing conference record. The Rebels went down early, and the Razorbacks fought off a late comeback attempt



PHOTO BY: MARLEE CRAWFORD

Terence Davis dribbles toward the basket during the game against Florida earlier this season. Ole Miss won 78-72.

to seal the victory. What went wrong for the Rebels?

Well, a lot. But first and foremost, the Rebels are failing to consistently connect from three. Without a low-post threat (sorry, but Bruce Stevens is still too big of a defensive liability to build a team around), the Rebels are forced to rely on their guards, and in today's version of the game, teams live and die by the 3-point shot. Top-level coaches understand the shot's statistical advantage and abuse it, and mid-range shots are a thing of the past. Even the Toronto Raptors' DeMar DeRozan, perhaps the greatest mid-range shooter in the NBA, has been leaning more toward 3-point shots this year.

This trend has left Kennedy's teams in the dust, and this year is no exception. On

Saturday, the Rebels shot a decent, but not great, 37.9 percent from behind the arc, making 11 of their 29 attempts. However, those numbers were padded by back-to-back Burnett threes near the end of the game. Arkansas, on the other hand, drained 11 threes of its own on just 22 attempts.

Efficiency is key, and the Rebels are anything but efficient.

In fact, Ole Miss ranks 267th nationally in 3-point field goal percentage on the season, making 161 of its 486 attempts thus far (33.1 percent). But what's fascinating is the Rebels' obsession with the shot. Their 486 attempts rank 71st in the country, oddly high for a team toothless from three. Teams can be successful while shooting this low of a 3-point percentage.

Just look to 14-5 Middle Tennessee, a 2017 NCAA Tournament team that beat Ole Miss earlier this season and shoots 33.2 percent from three. The Blue Raiders have an identity; they run the court and rely on their size to stretch defenses, and it masks their ineffectiveness from downtown. Kennedy's team, on the other hand, lacks an identity, and its over-reliance on deep, low-percentage attempts confirms it.


Davis and Burnett are taking the lion's share of Ole Miss' 3-point attempts this season (211 of 486), and the two are averaging a combined 36 percent from behind the arc. Shuler, who has taken the third-most threes on the team, has drained just 22 of his 82 attempts this year. Averaged together, the Rebels' three "sharpest

shooters" shot 33.4 percent from 3-point land.

Not good enough for a team on the brink of SEC relevance.




Without a legitimate threat from the arc, opponents are free to sit in and let the Rebels attempt to attack the paint. Burnett and Tyree take turns putting their heads down and driving to the lane, hoping to score or pick up a foul, at least. That's no way to run an offense. The Rebel attack looks stagnant and unimaginative on the floor, and the team lacks an attacking ethos.

Ultimately, that's on Kennedy, whose contract was not extended in May of last year. He is running out of time to save his job. From the perspective of an Ole Miss basketball fan, that might be a good thing.



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